

## **Wheels and Heels - August 2002**

*Email news from MoDOT Bicycle/Pedestrian Coordinator Caryn Giarratano*

Greetings Windbenders!

Two months ago, I hit the ground running and I have been pedaling as fast as I could since. My second week on the job people walked up to me and said, "Oh, you're the new bike/ped coordinator...here!" They then handed me a thick file, turned and quickly disappeared!

I have been asked to work on bike/ped bridge access, investigate new rumble strip designs, refine the policy on Share the Road signs, fine-tune the policy on bike-safe grates and comment on how to accommodate bicyclists and pedestrians in the proposed I-70 Corridor!

I LOVE this job!!

I have been to St. Louis to a meeting about the Mississippi River Trail and to Kansas City to celebrate the kick-off of the Riverfront Heritage Trail. I have met with representatives of several state agencies to discuss the creation of statewide bike/ped safety materials packets to send to schools and bike shops. The first week of September I plan to attend the ProBike/ProWalk conference in St. Paul, MN. I am trying to gather as much information in as short a time as possible to equip myself to do my best to make our state a better place in which to ride a bicycle and in which to be a pedestrian.

The MoDOT folks have, without exception, been kind, helpful and interested in helping to make our state more bike/ped accessible. The problem I have encountered is that it takes soooooo loooooong to make changes. I am amazed by the number of other agencies, city groups and MoDOT departments who must have input into decisions.

During my efforts to gain b/p accommodations on the Jefferson City Bridge, I am constantly amazed by the amount of money and the difficulty level required by something I thought would be quick and easy. MoDOT is required to meet federal and state standards for ADA, lane widths, percent of grade, guard rails and sidewalk width, plus stay within the maximum load-bearing capacity of the bridge! So far I have permission and funding to replace the grates with bike-safe ones and restripe the lanes on the northbound bridge to allow a seven-foot outside shoulder. The plan is to accomplish this next May.

I have discovered that it is impossible to "just do it!"

Most days I am grateful for the day to end. It's not because I don't like what I'm doing...it's because my poor 64k brain has been stuffed with 250k of vocabulary and new knowledge!

It is my hope that I will be able to email regular updates on my progress towards making Missouri a better place for bicyclists and pedestrians. Please let me know if you wish to be on the email list.

Tailwinds, Caryn  
573-522-9297, giarrc1@mail.modot.state.mo.us